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# PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARS



**Conferral**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

### MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT **Soraya M. Coley**

The President's Scholars Program represents the finest of Cal Poly Pomona's traditions. Scholarship recipients not only succeed in the classroom, they are committed to make society better. They volunteer as tutors and fund-raisers. They work in their communities volunteering their time at animal shelters, churches, libraries, schools and theaters.

They are driven to assist the next generation of college students, especially those in underserved communities. Since 1983, more than 600 scholarships have been awarded. Today's celebration would not be possible without the generosity of our benefactors. Like the students we honor, they are difference-makers. It is with great pleasure that we celebrate this year's recipients.





## 2023-24 President's Scholars

### BENEFACTORS

## Drs. Janet & W. Keith Kellogg II

Janet "Jean" Kellogg and W. Keith Kellogg II were longtime supporters of the university. In 1999, the Kelloggs donated \$200,000 to match contributions to the President's Council Scholars program. Their gift inspired numerous individual and family donations, leading to the creation of a significant endowment fund.

W. Keith Kellogg II is the namesake and grandson of cereal magnate W.K. Kellogg, one of the university's founders. He and Janet were champions of the W. Keith and Janet Kellogg University Art Gallery, which was expanded because of their generous support. The Honors College was named the Keith & Jean Kellogg Honors College in 2006 after a generous bequest from the W. Keith Kellogg II Trust.

In 1994, W. Keith Kellogg II received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Cal Poly Pomona and was also recognized as an honorary university alumnus. He passed away in 2005; Janet Kellogg passed away in 2014.





## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Mark Maldonado

JASEN STRAND MEMORIAL President's Scholar

**Major:** Pure Mathematics

**College of Science**

**Activities:** Tutor, Learning Resource Center

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Community. Ever since I came to Cal Poly Pomona, I have formed more connections with people than any other school that I have attended."*

Taking a linear algebra class in community college in fall 2020 kickstarted Mark's passion for mathematics, when during online instruction, a notoriously difficult professor expected his students to write proofs with little preparation. Teaching himself how to meet these expectations earned Mark an A in the class and the confidence to know that he "truly can do anything I put my heart to. This experience is one of the biggest reasons I have gotten to this point in my education." As a math tutor for the Learning Resource Center, Mark is grateful to teach what he loves and hopes to be both a researcher and college math educator to show others that mathematics "is beautiful and interconnected in many ways." A first-generation student with autism, he wants to secure a job that is suitable for his disability and enjoyable. After obtaining his bachelor's degree, Mark hopes to pursue a master's degree, conduct research related to real analysis and teach college.



**TINA and PETER STRAND** created the scholarship in memory of their son, Cal Poly Pomona mechanical engineering student Jasen Strand who was diagnosed with Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy at age six and who passed away in 2010. Committed to enjoying life to its fullest, Jasen was passionate about learning, overcame challenges and became a bright, energetic scholar, excelling in his academic endeavors. Tina and Peter Strand are honoring Jasen's support from the Disability Resource Center by providing educational resources for more students with disabilities and who share Jasen's enthusiasm for learning.

In Memoriam  
**Jasen Strand**

**BENEFACTOR**



**Tina and Peter Strand**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Clara Guirguis

ALBERT ZORASTER President's Scholar

**Major:** Animal Science, Pre-Veterinary

**Don B. Huntley College of Agriculture**

**Activities:** President of Alpha Lambda

**Delta and member of Pre-Vet Club;**

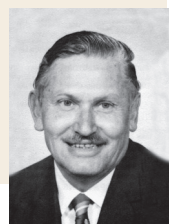
**Achieve Scholars Program**

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Hands-on. Our school is very much focused on doing rather than just talking about which is one of the main reasons I chose CPP."*

Clara describes herself as a kinesthetic learner who highly values her volunteer, club and work experiences as part of her academic journey. Learning skills through a job as a vet assistant, Clara continued her growth as a veterinary technician at Placentia Veterinary Clinic, where she solidified her desire to become a surgeon under the tutelage of mentor Dr. Debra Cassebeer. At Cal Poly Pomona, she expanded her research experience, participating in Professor Glenn Kageyama's laboratory to focus on neuron loss in Alzheimer's disease. Her campus involvement with the Pre-Vet Club has provided opportunities to connect with students and professors, helping her toward her goal of attending veterinary school. "Academics are one part of distinguishing yourself and go hand-in-hand with experiences. At CPP, I've joined more organizations, and taken on leadership roles with a goal to do more in the future such as peer advising and the Horsemanship Club. I want to make my experience that much better but also help others have good experiences as well."



**CHRISTINE and ALBERT ZORASTER** joined the President's Council in 1992. Christine endowed this scholarship in the memory of her husband Albert. His life celebrated the ideals of hard work and determination; he was an advocate for his community, industry and children. The Albert Zoraster scholarship is awarded to the student who values hard work and is dedicated to the enrichment of their community.



BENEFACTOR

Christine & Albert Zoraster



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Angel Campos

MARK ALDRICH President's Scholar

**Major:** Finance

**College of Business Administration**

**Activities:** President, Student Managed Investment Fund; Bronco Asset Management Team; Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute's Research Challenge Competition; Supplemental Instructor, Learning Resource Center

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Innovative. We emphasize getting practical experience in our fields and offer many programs which can help students do just that."*

Committed to the idea that "nothing worth having comes easy," Angel sees his experiences with Cal Poly Pomona investment co-curriculars as essential to his future career in finance. Selected as one of 16 students in the Student Managed Investment Fund to actively manage three investment portfolios with \$500 million in assets, Angel and his teammates placed first in the annual 2022 CFA Society of Orange County Student Managed Investment fund while also presenting a Wall Street analyst report to the CFA Institute Research Challenge Competition. The oldest of six siblings and the first in his family to pursue a college degree, Angel enjoys being in a position to encourage others, including teaching a biweekly managerial finance class to assist fellow students. Angel hopes to one day give back to Cal Poly Pomona "to impact students and help them in the way that scholarships helped me for my own education." He plans to earn both a master's in business administration and a chartered financial analysis designation.



Long-time philanthropists and Cal Poly Pomona supporters, **JO** and **TED DUTTON** generously established this scholarship named after their son, **MARK ALDRICH**. Mark is a Cal Poly Pomona alumnus who earned a bachelor's degree in finance, real estate and law in 1994. To recognize the contributions made by the fraternity, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, first consideration is given to its members for the Mark Aldrich scholarship.



BENEFACTORS

Jo and Theodore "Ted" Dutton



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Ryan Justin De Jesus

EILEEN AND MICHAEL CONSIDINE President's Scholar

**Major:** Computer Information Systems

**College of Business Administration**

**Activities:** Students With an Interest in Future Technology (SWIFT) Club; Forensic And Security Technology (FAST) Club; Management Information Systems Student Association (MISSA) Club; Summer 2023 Enterprise Application Intern at Resources Global Professionals (RGP)

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Dynamic. The hands-on learning and internships offered through partnerships prepare students for the workforce."*

Justin is driven to make a positive impact on the world and sees education as the tool to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to effect change. Focusing on information technology, Justin has learned to analyze complicated data sets that can inform business decisions and also leveraging technology to increase productivity. A summer internship at a software development firm provided real-world experience in creating a new product, research, designing user interfaces and usability testing. "Exploring new technology and seeing how they might be applied to enhance people's lives have always been my passions. I have experimented for endless hours programming languages like Python and Java. Taking part in code challenges at hackathons have also allowed me to work with other developers on challenging tasks in a friendly rivalry." He plans to start his own tech ventures that will create job opportunities for others and cites mentorship as a motivating goal to contribute to the development of his community.



Alumnus **MICHAEL CONSIDINE** and his wife **EILEEN** have been active supporters of Cal Poly Pomona. From industrial manufacturing to investment management and sod distribution, the Considines have been fortunate in their business endeavors. Students who demonstrate the ability to succeed and enhance the financial or banking industries are awarded the Eileen and Michael Considine scholarship.



BENEFACTOR

Michael and Eileen Considine



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Alex Jimenez Cruz

GREGOIRE FAMILY President's Scholar

**Major:** Finance, Real Estate and Law

**College of Business Administration**

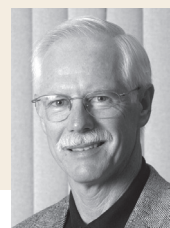
**Activities:** Treasurer for ASI Student Government; Resident Advisor; Peer Mentor for Project Success; Finance Society, Student Managed Investment Fund; Delta Sigma Pi; United Business Student Senate; Student Managed Investment Fund; César E. Chávez Center for Higher Education; Cal State Student Association

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *“Collaborative. I have been able to work with people from a diverse range of backgrounds and I always leave every encounter learning something new.”*

Alex has learned that leadership within his various campus involvements is not one-size fits all, but fluid and adaptable to specific environments. As treasurer of ASI, he learned about pushing through imposter syndrome to lead meetings to approve budget requests from over 300 university clubs. With the Student Managed Investment Fund, his work to conduct high-level finance forecasting and the SMIF's team work solidified his interest to work in finance. Alex draws inspiration to graduate from his parents, who have sacrificed to help Alex and his siblings prioritize education. He hopes to empower others through teaching investment. “One day, I hope to come back to campus to help students build their own portfolios, since I have seen firsthand how financial literacy can transform lives.”



**RONALD GREGOIRE** began his impressive career in the auto dealership business by joining an accounting firm after graduating with honors from Cal Poly Pomona in 1971. Following many successful years in the auto industry, Ron sold his business to enjoy time with family and friends. The Gregoire Family scholarship is presented to the student who exhibits strong leadership abilities and a determination to succeed.



BENEFACTOR

Gregoire Family





## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Harini Pootheri

ROBERTS FAMILY President's Scholar

**Major:** Computer Information Systems, emphasis in Business Intelligence, minor in Data Science

**College of Business Administration**

**Activities:** Renaissance Scholars; Kellogg Honors College; iFoster team; INSAN Foundation for Humanity volunteer

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Family. The dynamics of student body, professors and staff create a supportive community."*

Spending six years in the foster care system with placement in 15 different homes motivated Harini to join the close-knit community of Renaissance Scholars. During high school, Harini sought solace in the stability of the library that allowed her to research and understand the biology of human behavior, leading to her goal of advocating for mental health. Her interests led to her involvement in the Bay Area Society for Neuroscience in which she served as student executive to manage student representatives and public outreach. She intends to combine her interests in mental health and data analysis with advocacy. Harini currently works for iFoster, a nonprofit that connect federally qualified health centers to MediCal recipients or the uninsured. "If preventative measures can be taken to help foster youth find healthy ways to heal from trauma, the issues of incarceration, addiction and homelessness can be mitigated. I hope to ensure that every foster youth receives effective and adequate mental health services."



**DOROTHY and KENT ROBERTS** have been members of the President's Council since 1985. As past owners of an English language development publishing business for 26 years and active participants in several educational nonprofits in their community, the Roberts demonstrate their dedication to the educational process on a daily basis. The Roberts Family scholarship is intended to recognize promising students who are seeking educational careers, have demonstrated superior scholastic performance and want to make a difference in the world.



BENEFACTORS

Dorothy and Kent Roberts



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Marcella Adriana Pedroza

GWEN EVANS LA BOUNTY President's Scholar

**Major:** Liberal Studies, Pre-Credential

**College of Education and Integrative Studies**

**Activities:** Mentor, Bronco Navigators Mentor Collective; Community Services Assistant

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Empathetic. From when I first transferred, I immediately saw how CPP has multiple outreach events to understand the feelings and experiences of the campus community."*

Marcella wants to remind others that there is no deadline for reaching goals. Originally a transfer student in architecture, Marcella later realized her true passion for education. Fueled by family support including grandparents who worked their entire lives to provide for their family's future, Marcella wants to similarly ignite the passion of the Latino/a/x community through raising awareness of S.T.E.M. in the elementary and middle schools. "I have had many teachers who have impacted my life in the best possible. Research shows that only 12 percent of U.S. teachers are from the Latino community. I want to be an addition to that statistic." She believes in giving back: After playing softball for 15 years, she now coaches her sister, and also serves as a peer mentor because of all that she gained from her mentors. She believes everything she has encountered is a "lesson that happens for a reason." She sees the scholarship as a sign that she is worthy of continuing her education and will continue to effect change in others.



The first lady of Cal Poly Pomona from 1977 to 1985, **GWEN EVANS LA BOUNTY** was a devoted wife and mother; she embraced the university community until she passed away in 1985. As an advocate for education, Mrs. La Bounty pursued her teaching credential, served as a PTA president and was involved in a local preschool program. Mrs. La Bounty served as a role model of charity and compassion, and the Gwen Evans La Bounty scholarship is awarded to the student who represents these attributes and is committed to educational excellence.

In Memoriam  
**Gwen Evans  
La Bounty**

**BENEFACTOR**



**Friends and Family of Gwen Evans La Bounty**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Aryan Patel

CHANG FAMILY President's Scholar

**Major:** Manufacturing Engineering

**College of Engineering**

**Activities:** President (current) and Events Director (former), International Society of Automation Club; member, Associated Manufacturing Societies Club; Marketing Director, Real Estate Club; volunteer, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Temple

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Innovation. At CPP, I have learned how to think critically and take a variety of approaches to reach a solution to a problem."*

For Aryan, inspiration to study engineering comes from his appreciation for understanding the process of creation. As a youngster, he attended Home Depot Saturday workshops to construct projects from wood and learned about construction methodologies. "This challenged the generic right-and-wrong framework that shapes our everyday lives. This was my initiation into innovation: the understanding that there could be more than one way to build a product." Aryan credits internships, including his first at L3 Harris Technologies and this past summer at Proctor and Gamble in building his manufacturing engineering foundation and his interpersonal skills. Motivated by the motto "in the joy of others lies our own" from gurus Pramukh Swami Maharaj and Mahant Swami Maharaj, Aryan aspires to develop an environmentally friendly vehicle and "create a positive ripple effect to others to take action in creating a greener and more sustainable future."



**WEN** and **MEI LIEN CHANG** are outstanding supporters of their community and Cal Poly Pomona. Wen and Mei Lien firmly believe that education is the most effective tool to aid all social classes in the pursuit of their dreams. The Chang Family scholarship was established to assist outstanding engineering students in their pursuit of scholastic excellence.



BENEFACTORS

Mei Lien and Wen Chang



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Quinn Dougherty

OSCAR PERLAZA President's Scholar

**Major:** Mechanical Engineering

**College of Engineering**

**Activities:** Member, Tau Beta Pi;  
Engineering intern, Motivo

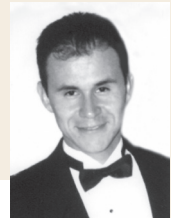
**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Supportive. Between the Disability Resource Center, the Veterans Resource Center and the Maximizing Engineering Potential programs, I feel like Cal Poly Pomona invests in my success."*

After Quinn's military aviator career was cut short by an injury, he realized that a large part of his love of flying came from his interest in engineering. Overcoming self-doubts about pursuing a rigorous academic program, he earned two associate degrees with a high GPA before transferring to Cal Poly Pomona and earned placement on the President and Dean's honor lists. "My experience in aviation taught me how capable I can be in a technical field where I feel engaged." Quinn feels that his unique background as a nontraditional student allows him to bring a different perspective to his program. Space exploration, especially the search for life in our solar system, is one of his engineering career goals. Outside of his studies, Quinn enjoys repairing and making things as well as fostering dogs, mastering rope dart (a performance flow art based on martial arts weapon performed with an LED dart or one lit on fire) and going to concerts with his wife and friends.



As the former director of the Maximizing Engineering Potential (MEP) program, **CATHARINE HUDSPETH** has helped countless students on their way to successful careers in engineering. The Oscar Perlaza scholarship was created to recognize the outstanding leadership and perseverance of a highly motivated MEP civil engineering alumnus whose life ended too soon. The Oscar Perlaza scholarship is awarded to the student who exemplifies leadership and dedication to the development of others.

In Memoriam  
**Oscar Perlaza**



**BENEFACTOR**

**M. Catharine Hudspeth**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Jason Askins

SHELTON FAMILY President's Scholar

**Major:** Electronic Systems Engineering  
Technology

**College of Engineering**

**Activities:** Southern California Engineering  
Technology Association; Solar Boat Club;  
Jet Propulsion Laboratory Intern

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Involved. The  
learn-by-doing environment provides  
resources to help accomplish your goals."*

Jason believes that his persistence has paid off toward his goal to build and design technology. Originally starting at UCLA in chemical engineering, Jason found that the major was not his passion and he withdrew to re-evaluate. After attending community college and working, he realized his love for engineering technology and came to Cal Poly Pomona for its smaller class sizes and hands-on experiences. "My time at CPP has been surreal. I went from delivering pizza to creating custom test fixtures for a magnetic sensors company. I am grateful for the friends that I have made that help me remember that I can be the person I want to be." As a senior, Jason intends to focus on autonomy and robotics: His group senior project proposal to create an autonomous delivery robot was accepted, and he also hopes to develop skillsets like modifying a golf pushcart with tracking and pathfinding capabilities. "I came to this school just trying to get my degree, but instead found exactly where I was supposed to be."



**MICHAEL and TINA SHELTON** have been part of the campus community for more than 30 years. The Sheltons are each the first member of their respective families to achieve a college education. This scholarship was established to honor the memory of Doc's parents, Otto and Lois Shelton, who grew up during the Great Depression and were only able to attend school through the eighth grade. The Shelton Family Scholarship is designed to provide recognition and assistance to an outstanding student who is first in their immediate family to attend college.



BENEFACTORS

Tina and Michael "Doc" Shelton



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

### Lih Koo

IANA WILLIAMS President's Scholar

**Major:** Mechanical Engineering

**College of Engineering**

**Activities:** CPP Baja SAE; Mechanical Engineering Intern at Endera Motors; Math and Engineering Tutor at Learning Resource Center; Teacher's Assistant in Mechanical Engineering Department

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Fulfilling. The resources here help me to grow as a person as well as help identify my career goals."*

Lih learned shortly after transferring to Cal Poly Pomona that opportunities for teamwork and hands-on experience are equally if not more important than the high GPA he has worked to achieve in order to secure future employment as a mechanical engineer. The transition to in-person classes allowed in-person teamwork on student projects, including being a part of research to design and manufacture an aerial vehicle for search and rescue of drowning victims. As an international student from Malaysia, Lih has found that his work at two on-campus jobs and his internship at Endera Motors have helped him grow tremendously. Endera's origins are rooted in his own core value to advance the adoption of sustainable energy, and he hopes to work as a thermal engineer. "I chose to study engineering because I love learning new things and being meaningfully challenged. I love tutoring and helping others, and love my internship because every day is a new opportunity for me to learn while contributing to sustainability."



As the former director of the Maximizing Engineering Potential (MEP) program, **CATHARINE HUDSPETH** has helped countless students on their way to successful careers in engineering. The Iana Williams scholarship was created to remember the outstanding leadership of a highly motivated MEP electrical engineering alumna whose life was cut short. The Iana Williams scholarship is intended to bring recognition to a student who has continued in Iana's tradition of furthering the development of technical expertise in their community.



BENEFACTOR

**M. Catharine Hudspeth**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Raneem Awad

JAMES H. JONES President's Scholar

**Major:** Architecture

**College of Environmental Design**

**Activities:** Intern, Karabachian Design Office

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Ambition. Studying alongside exceptional classmates and under the guidance of dedicated instructors within a positive studio environment has personally motivated me to give my best."*

The challenges of growing up in war-torn Syria have shaped Raneem's resiliency and gratitude for life's blessings. Despite the uncertainties, Raneem remained focused on her desire to study architecture, which combines her passions for art, science and service. She immigrated to the United States at 19 years old, balancing three jobs to support her family while earning three associate degrees with a 4.0 GPA. A firm believer in the power of compassion, Raneem's work with Ventura College's Architecture Club to build low-income housing in Tijuana showed her first-hand "that acts of service show importance of teamwork and can have profound impactson improving the lives of others." On campus, her efforts have led to her nomination for the National Society of Leadership and Success and a fourth-year study abroad opportunity at Biberarch University of Applied Sciences in Germany. Raneem's parents have guided her efforts, and she hopes to pay tribute to them by building a home for them in addition to making a postive impact for others through her designs.



The late **LT. COL. JAMES JONES** was a longtime university supporter who established two major art collections for Cal Poly Pomona. After serving in World War II, Jones studied citrus fruit production at the Cal Poly Voorhis campus and finally received his degree from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 1951. The James H. Jones scholarship is presented to an exceptional environmental design student who seeks to improve the community.

In Memoriam  
**James H.  
Jones**



**BENEFACTOR**

**James H. Jones**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Mahdi Abbas

RINEHART FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP (Graduate)

**Major:** Urban and Regional Planning

**College of Environmental Design**

**Activities:** Director of Public Policy, Inner City Law Center; Assembly District 56 Delegate, California Democratic Party; Board member, Asian Democrats of Los Angeles County

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Professional. The Urban Planning program is really set up to serve working professionals and that has allowed me and others to pursue an education while furthering our careers."*

A pivotal moment six years ago helped Mahdi discover his calling. Evicted and without options for affordable housing, he had just secured a room at a transitional housing project when his cousin called to offer a couch for several weeks, helping him to find a place to rent shortly thereafter. "It worries me that many people do not have cousins to give them a call. Without stable housing, it is so challenging to focus on long-term goals because the daily tasks of surviving become so difficult." Focusing on affordable housing and development, Mahdi now balances his 3.95 GPA in full-time classes with a full-time job at the Inner City Law Center and strives toward his goal of removing housing barriers. "As an urban planner, I will prioritize uplifting low-income communities and communities of color and advocate to end homelessness once and for all." Mahdi is grateful for scholarship support and the leadership skills he has learned in his program.



**LARRY RINEHART** is the former president and chief executive officer of PFF Bank & Trust in Pomona and is a member of the President's Council. As a graduate from Pomona High School and the University of La Verne, Rinehart has been involved in the local community for many years. He has actively participated on various boards such as the Pomona Valley Red Cross, Mt. Baldy United Way, Fairplex, Casa Colina and the Cal Poly Pomona University Educational Trust. The Rinehart Family scholarship was established to recognize an outstanding student who is committed to the university and their local community.



BENEFACTOR

Larry Rinehart





## 2023-24 President's Scholars

### Ruth Kent

AL LEVIE FAMILY President's Scholar

**Major:** Hospitality Management, emphasis in Food and Beverage

**The Collins College of Hospitality Management**

**Activities:** Pineapple Club; Hotel, Resort and Destination Professionals; National Society of Minorities in Hospitality; Club Management Association of America; The Collins College Diversity and Equity Committee; EOP; Womxn's Resource Center

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Unique. There are so many opportunities that you get just from being a student and being associated with the Collins College's name."*

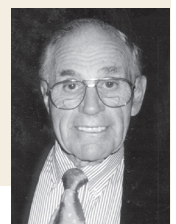
Ruth found Cal Poly Pomona's hospitality program with the help of a high school teacher who encouraged her interest. After a subsequent visit, Ruth knew from the campus scenery and the variety of opportunities that she had selected the right spot for pursuing her dreams. A high school culinary class sparked her interest in food and beverage, and she placed second in a regional competition hosted by Family Career Community Leaders of America organization where she served as president. As a first-generation student committed to challenging herself academically, Ruth values her numerous service, involvement and leadership experiences at CPP. Ruth's inspiration for achievements derives from her mother, who passed away in 2022 after a years-long battle with cancer. "My mom was the strongest woman I knew and inspired me to be a strong and independent woman who never gives up when things are hard."



In memory of **AL LEVIE**, who passed away in 1999, this President's Council Scholarship is named after the man who was instrumental in the initial fund-raising efforts of what is now known as The Collins College of Hospitality Management. Levie brought his leadership and expertise along with a vast network of industry executives to the young school in the '80s. The Al Levie Family scholarship was established to recognize high-achieving students in the hospitality management program.

In Memoriam  
**Al Levie**

**BENEFACTOR**



**Friends of the Al Levie Family**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Robert Hook

ARTHUR M. BERMAN President's Scholar

**Major:** Organizational Communication

**College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences**

**Activities:** CPP baseball team (4 years)

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Family, because when I'm on campus, it truly does feel like a family environment."*

Robert's freshman goal to focus on baseball and pursue a professional baseball career changed when the pandemic forced the cancellation of the baseball season. He pivoted to pouring his energy into studying and earning a high GPA. Assistant Professor Mark Generous inspired Robert to realize the importance of communications, and combined with his family ethos to dedicating oneself to work hard no matter how hard something is, he has flourished in tackling assignments and finding tremendous purpose in each course. In his freshman year, Robert received news of his father's diagnosis of ALS, which has shifted his mindset to cherish every moment and to make his family proud. He has learned valuable time management through balancing family and finishing assignments to allow focus on weekend games, practices and daily conditioning. Like his father and grandfather, he plans to become a firefighter, excited "to serve people on days that are usually looked at as the worst and to be able to help others."



**MICHAEL BERMAN** was formerly employed at Cal Poly Pomona as the vice president for instructional and information technology. His family and friends established this scholarship in honor of Mike's late father, Arthur M. Berman. Art Berman worked for the Los Angeles Times for more than 30 years; he served as a mentor for many people in the newspaper industry and strongly believed in encouraging young people to determine their own futures. He saw education, and higher education in particular, as the most important tool for self-development. The Arthur M. Berman scholarship will honor a student who is working toward a career in journalism or public service.

In Memoriam  
**Arthur M.  
Berman**



**BENEFACTORS**

**Ann Walker and A. Michael Berman**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Rein Mortada

BERNARD AND LUCIE BIDART President's Scholar

**Major:** Political Science, minor in History

**College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences**

**Activities:** Prison Education Program; EOP; Kellogg Honors College; CPP Children's Center teacher

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Supportive. I attribute my success to the support and guidance of the professors on campus."*

An early-childhood education job at Cal Poly Pomona has led Rein into higher education studies that align with her interest in international relations. "As a Lebanese immigrant, I grew up speaking Arabic with my family and friends. I later picked up French and spent time learning about French colonialism in Lebanon. Wanting to understand the historical and political context behind the Middle East conflict, political science is the perfect intersection of my academic interests." Thinking that her degree might lead to law school, Rein pivoted in her third year to her first love of teaching after an internship class and working with Professor Renford Reese in the Prison Education Program. In the program, she taught incarcerated youths in medium and high security detention centers to prepare for college by studying for the GED exam, filling out financial aid forms, and researching colleges. Rein aspires to use her education and life experiences to positively contribute to both local and global communities by pursuing a career in teaching and research.



A partner with the law firm of Shernoff, Bidart & Darras in Claremont, **MICHAEL BIDART** is an alumnus with a degree in economics. It was Bidart's parents, Bernard and Lucie, who inspired him to be an attorney. His parents encouraged their sons to pursue college degrees, knowing firsthand the hardships of life without a college education. The Bernard and Lucie Bidart scholarship has been established to help others fulfill their own educational dreams.



BENEFACTOR

Jeannette and Michael Bidart



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Michael Perez

ANNETTE F. AND MORTON J. BLUMNER President's Scholar

**Major:** Criminology

**College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences**

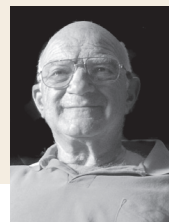
**Activities:** Kellogg Honors College student;  
Model United Nations member;  
Pre-Law Club Vice President

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Friendly. From the staff, faculty and students I have met, people are happy to meet and help you."*

Michael is dedicated to modeling service for his community, always seeking ways to help others in any way he can. Prior to Cal Poly Pomona, he credits his involvement in Boy Scouts of America, where he was an Eagle Scout, for building his skills in leadership, public speaking, teamwork and communication. Drawn to the university's polytechnic focus and diversity, he has furthered his goal to eventually working in law enforcement by working as a campus community service officer responsible for housing patrols, Disability Resource Center driving assistance, and assisting at the University Police Department's front desk. Last year, as a member of the CPP Model United Nations team, Michael's team won the Outstanding Delegation title conference and Outstanding Position Paper in New York City representing the Central African country of Gabon. Saying that he is "motivated by support my family has given me," he plans to attend law school after graduation.



**DR. SIDNEY BLUMNER** established the Annette F. and Morton J. Blumner CLASS President's Council Scholarship in honor of his parents. Professor Blumner and his mother, Annette Blumner, have supported Cal Poly Pomona's College of Letters, Arts & Social Sciences for many years because of their belief in education and youth. "I am a product of public education," Blumner says. "I support public schools because they need help, and the students need help. People need to give back to society." This scholarship supports high performing students in the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences, where he spent 33 years as a tenured faculty member, chair of the Department of Economics, and is now a donor.



BENEFACTOR

Annette F. and Sidney Blumner



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Nuoyan Promise Li

NICOLE CHRISTINE COTÉ President's Scholar

**Major:** English, emphasis in Education

**College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences**

**Activities:** Alpha Lambda Delta Academic Honor Society; Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society, CORE (Club and Organization); Bronco Navigator Mentor; CLASS Council Vice President, former Secretary; INSAN Pomona to feed the homeless; Bronco LEAD; Orientation Team Captain at Office of New Student Programs and Family Engagement; Club and Organization Development Leader

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Creativity. CPP has the creativity to help students success and help them explore different career paths or find new hobbies."*

Promise's experiences as an ESL student remind her that she is "strong just like any other" as she follows her dream to teach at the elementary school level. At a young age, she and her twin brother took on translation responsibilities for their mom and grandparents, helping them understand insurance coverage and doctor appointments. "As they have raised me to think of family, I felt like an educator to them. The more involved I became with my family, the more confidence I have in teaching and knew exactly what I wanted to pursue in the future." To prepare for teaching, she has pursued leadership and mentorship roles at Cal Poly Pomona leading to a research presentation on culture shock with three other orientation captains at a regional conference. She hopes to pursue a Ph.D. and teach college level courses and pay forward the kindness of her educational role models.



The **COTÉ FAMILY** endowed this scholarship in honor of Nicole Coté, who passed away during her senior year at Cal Poly Pomona in 1999 at the age of 21. Nicole was the recipient of the 1999-2000 Lowell Overton President's Council Scholarship. Nicole felt strongly that academic scholarships should be awarded based on merit, and it is with that in mind that the Coté family has made this scholarship available to a very qualified student in the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences.

In Memoriam  
**Nicole  
Christine Coté**

**BENEFACTORS**



**Marguerite and Robert Coté**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

### Christian Solis

HUGH AND JUDY LA BOUNTY President's Scholar

**Major:** Music Performance

**College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences**

**Activities:** Principal Clarinetist, CPP Wind Ensemble; Band Manager, Department of Music; Resident Advisor, University Housing Services; Summer Conference Aide

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Opportunity. CPP has a very high employment rate after graduation and also helps many underrepresented groups with their futures."*

Christian began his college studies in his birthplace of Costa Rica, studying agronomy and music because of his love for his family farm and playing clarinet but which also involved full-time enrollment in three different universities. Spending hours commuting by bus while taking care of his grandmother who had just developed cancer, Christian's daily schedule included studying, three hours of nightly sleep and sharing responsibility in his grandmother's round-the-clock care. After her passing, Christian pushed himself even harder, taking more online classes during the pandemic but it eventually took a toll on his physical and mental health. His father encouraged him to focus on the major he really loved. "Now, in my third year I couldn't have done it without all the support of the music department. I am here because they believed in a Costa Rican student that sent a video of himself playing the clarinet in hopes to get one opportunity." He plans to pursue a composition career and create a new youth music institute in Costa Rica.



**HUGH O. LA BOUNTY** joined the faculty of Cal Poly Pomona in 1953 as an instructor in the English department. He served as the university's third president and was responsible for transforming a regional institution into a major comprehensive university. President La Bounty's legacy includes having established the President's Council in 1980 as well as the President's Scholars program in 1983. The Hugh and Judy La Bounty scholarship is awarded to students who have distinguished themselves as excellent scholars in the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences.



BENEFACTOR

**Hugh & Judy La Bounty**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Megan Meyer

LOWELL OVERTON President's Scholar

**Major:** Psychology

**College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences**

**Activities:** Teacher's Assistant, Sylvan Learning Center; Summer Camp Teacher, YMCA; volunteer teacher's aide, Armstrong Elementary School, Diamond Bar

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Diversity. The campus has something to offer for everyone no matter who you are, what you look like, or what you like to do, including clubs, resources and jobs."*

Megan fell in love with Cal Poly Pomona after taking a campus tour during her senior year of high school and was thrilled to be accepted into the psychology program. Overcoming past challenges with navigating school and mental health, Megan has found a passion for her education and a deep sense of accomplishment in pursuing her dream to help others through counseling. At CPP, she has earned recognition on the President's and Dean's honor lists each semester, motivating her to graduate and go to graduate school. "I do this for my grandparents, who have supported me every step of the way and have provided me with love. I do this for my mom because I am thankful she was able to improve her mental health and watch me achieve my goals. I do this for my dad, who never went to college and can see his child succeed. Lastly, I do this for my best friend, who I lost to suicide." Megan plans to become an elementary school counselor.



**LOWELL OVERTON** is a friend of education. He credits his education at Cal Poly Pomona for his success as a nationally recognized real estate broker. As an active alumnus and founding member of the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences alumni chapter, Lowell is engaged in the campus community and various alumni activities and programs. The Lowell Overton scholarship is intended to recognize exceptional students who are engaged in their communities and value their educational opportunities.



BENEFACTOR

Lowell Overton



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Anai Hernandez

NORMAN WILLIAMSON JR. FAMILY President's Scholar

**Major:** Music Performance, minor in Math

**College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences**

**Activities:** Barista; CPP music ensembles; dog training; playing piano

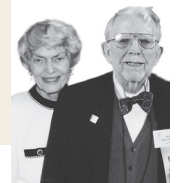
**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Welcoming. The beauty of the campus' surroundings and the community of friends and professors create a wonderful environment."*

Anai was at first hesitant to change majors to align with her passion for music. Despite the questions about music careers paths, Anai has no regrets studying music because of support from teachers and the music department that have encouraged her pathway. One day, she hopes to share her story with others, showing that it is possible to have a successful career in music. She also wants to teach private lessons to inspire future students to also follow their dreams. This past spring semester, she was enrolled in 10 classes including multiple ensembles while working part-time. Last summer, she toured with a music group that practiced and performed for 12 hours daily. With her full plate, she still finds time for animal care, which is one of her favorite hobbies, and she has learned dog training through the adoption of a puppy while also rescuing stray cats. Anai hopes to give back to her community by continuing her education in music and through continuing to partner with local animal rescue shelters.



**NORMAN WILLIAMSON JR.** was the son of W.K. Kellogg's only daughter, Elizabeth Kellogg Williamson. His ability to retain and document the history of the Kellogg family was one of Williamson's legacies to his family and the university. Because of his active involvement with Cal Poly Pomona, the Norman Williamson, Jr. Family scholarship was established to honor those dedicated students who are committed to making a difference in their communities.

In Memoriam  
**Norman  
Williamson Jr.**



**BENEFACTORS**

**Helen and Norman Williamson Jr.**





## 2023-24 President's Scholars

### Gina Lalli

DR. ANDREW G. CHONG President's Scholar

**Major:** Biology

**College of Science**

**Activities:** CPP Equestrian Team; SEES, Arches and EOP member; Kellogg Honors College; McNair Scholars Program; Assistant Trainer at Bellavantage Farms

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Accessible. This school cares that we succeed."*

Gina has had a lifelong interest in science, imagining herself as a future equine veterinarian or researcher before being sidelined by mental health issues and addiction. Realizing her dreams became such a large hurdle that she gave up and compromised her goals before embracing sobriety and therapy. Since returning to college, Gina is committed to helping others and changing the world through following her passions for scientific research. Maintaining a 3.9 GPA at Cal Poly Pomona, she has participated in the McNair Scholars program, researching stem cells under the guidance of Biology Professor Yuanxiang Zhao. Gina's interest in horses has been rekindled through the CPP Equestrian Team where she serves as the Horse Show Manager and competes in English and western riding. "I hope to serve as an inspiration to others who feel so buried by their circumstances that they have stopped allowing themselves to dream. I want to show them that anything is possible, at any age: you are never too old to give up on your dreams."



**DR. ANDREW CHONG** knows how important it is to see things clearly. As a successful optometrist in the San Gabriel Valley, he owns and operates two businesses. With a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, a master's degree in business administration and a doctorate in optometry, Chong values the educational opportunities provided to him. The Dr. Andrew G. Chong scholarship is awarded to recognize exceptional students from any major.



BENEFACTOR

Dr. Andrew Chong



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# George Manuel Hernandez

SIU FAMILY President's Scholar

**Major:** Chemistry, American Chemical Society option

### College of Science

**Activities:** Student Member of the American Chemical Society; Pre-Pharmacy Society; McNair Scholars Program; Osberger Research Group; PolyTransfer Program peer mentor; Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry student assistant

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Inclusive. The campus has allowed me to not only feel secure in being on campus as re-entry student but also find my niche to help those with similar backgrounds in adjusting to the challenges of undergraduate studies."*

George's academic achievements pay tribute to his parents who came to the United States to model hard work in pursuit of their dreams. Despite challenges including an emergency surgery and later a five-month recovery from a car accident, George continues to follow his desire to one day earn a Ph.D. Research in Assistant Professor Thomas Osberger's lab has broadened his passion for organic chemistry, and he plans to delve further into material chemistry and nanotoxicology with an aim to focus on material synthesis and analysis. "It is my earnest aspiration that I can help increase the diversity of future research workforce and foster an environment that accelerates scientific innovation while also making progress against social inequality. Though my personal academic journey has not been strictly linear, it is my experiences combined with support from family, friends, and mentors that motivate me to complete my studies."



The SIU FAMILY's involvement with education is longstanding, as evidenced by their generous contributions to the university. Both retired, Annie was an orthodontist and Tim, who passed away, was an anesthesiologist. The Sius enjoyed successful careers in their respective professions. The student who aspires to enrich quality of life through science will be awarded the Siu Family scholarship.



BENEFACTORS

**Drs. Annie Chin and Tim K. Siu**



## 2023-24 President's Scholars

# Adrianna Elihu

KIM FAMILY President's Scholar (Graduate)

**Major:** Biology Graduate, emphasis in Urban Wildlife Conservation

### College of Science

**Activities:** Historian, Biology Graduate Student Association; member, the Wildlife Society and Audbon Society; biologist at an environmental consulting company to conduct biological assessments of areas under development

**One Word to Describe CPP:** *"Diversity. Within the student and academic populations, diversity allows the sharing of ideas to increase understanding and betterment."*

Adrianna sees the critical synergy between communities and their physical environments and hopes to employ her biology training to inspire people's relationships to natural areas. After earning her zoology undergraduate degree at Cal Poly Pomona, she found her passion for urban wildlife through work in animal rehabilitation centers. Discovering Assistant Professor Janel Ortiz's work in conservation education inspired Adrianna to pursue her graduate degree at Cal Poly Pomona, and her master's project is focused on the greenspace matrix of the San Gabriel Valley in which she is developing and tracking metrics to determine patterns between wildlife diversity and socioeconomic status. She hopes her research will influence how cities are developed with human and wildlife thriving and coexisting. "Everyone deserves access to nature. I want to foster the connection people have for their communities, helping themselves and inspiring a circular pattern of giving back."



Alumnus **KEITH SOON KIM** and his wife, **SUNG**, have long supported Cal Poly Pomona. As a math and electrical engineering double major, Keith valued his educational opportunities and actively participated in campus clubs and programs. The Kim family demonstrates its commitment to education by providing opportunities for other students to succeed at Cal Poly Pomona. Outstanding engineering and science students are recognized by the Kim Family scholarship.



BENEFACTORS

Sung and Keith Soon Kim